

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6713

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, BG, SA

SUBJECT: BANGLADESH STILL SEEKING SAUDI RECOGNITION

1. THE VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA OF BDG FOREIGN MINISTER KAMAL HOSSAIN HAS INCREASED SPECULATION IN DACCA THAT SAUDI RECOGNITION OF BDG IS IMMINENT. ACCORDING TO PRESS ACCOUNTS, KAMAL IN HALF HOUR AUDIENCE WITH KING KHALED MAY 10 DELIVERED A MESSAGE OF CONDOLENCE FROM PRESIDENT MUJIBUR RAHMAN ON DEATH OF KING FAISAL. KAMAL ALSO REPORTEDLY EXTENDED MUJIB'S "WARM FRATERNAL GREETINGS" TO KHALED AND REITERATED BDG'S SUPPORT FOR THE ARAB CAUSE AND ITS PROMOTION OF COOPERATION AND SOLIDARITY AMONG MUSLIM AND NONALIGNED COUNTRIES. WELL AWARE OF THE LATE KING'S OBJECTION TO BANGLADESH'S STATUS AS A SECULAR STATE, BDG MAY BE HOPING THAT A LESS RIGID ATTITUDE BY KHALED WILL LEAD TO RECOGNITION.

2. THERE ARE ADDITIONAL INDICATIONS THAT BDG'S EXPECTATION HAVE BEEN RAISED IN RECENT MONTHS. ACCORDING TO THE REPORT OF ONE BDG OFFICIAL (WHICH WE HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO CONFIRM), AN EMISSARY FROM FAISAL MADE AN UNPUBLISHED VISIT TO DACCA IN MARCH BUT THE ASSASSINATION OF THE KING SOON THEREAFTER ELIMINATED ANY POSITIVE OUTCOME FROM THE TRIP. MOREOVER, IN AN ACTION REPORTEDLY TAKEN TO DEMONSTRATE TO THE SAUDIS THE ISLAMIC BONA FIDES OF

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THE BDG, MUJIB IN LATE MARCH ESTABLISHED THE ISLAMI

FOUNDATION TO PROPAGATE THE FAITH AND MANAGE ISLAMIC
CENTERS AND MOSQUES IN BANGLADESH. MUJIB'S ACTION WAS
WIDELY PRAISED BY MUSLIM LEADERS IN THE COUNTRY.

3. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE PRC, NO OTHER NATION'S
RECOGNITION HAS BEEN SO AVIDLY SOUGHT BY THE BDG AS
THAT OF SAUDI ARABIA. IF THE CURRENT EFFORT RESULTS IN
SAUDI RECONGITION, BDG WILL HAVE SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED
ITS THREE-YEAR DIPLOMATIC CAMPAIGN TO ESTABLISH FIRM
TIES TO THE ARAB, ISLAMIC AND OIL-RICH STATES OF THE
MIDDLE EAST.
BOSTER

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